

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula, Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

As you prepare appropriations legislation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education for fiscal year 2007, we respectfully request that you provide sufficient funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program.

Many programs that fund school counselors, directly and indirectly, were proposed to be eliminated in the President's FY 2007 budget request. This includes the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program; Comprehensive School Reform; Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants; Career and Technical Education including Section 118, Occupational and Employment Information; School Dropout Prevention; Mental Health Integration in Schools; GEAR UP; and TRIO's Talent Search and Upward Bound.

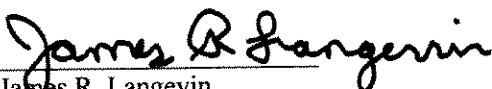
Of particular importance to school counselors is funding to continue the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program. ESSCP is crucial for school counselors and Congress has restored funding for ESSCP in previous years when the President has proposed eliminating it. However, due to the program's statutory funding trigger, secondary schools will not benefit unless total funding exceeds \$40 million, with that base amount reserved for elementary schools. The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program is intended to provide schools with the necessary resources so that school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, child and adolescent psychiatrists, and other qualified psychologists can work together to establish a comprehensive counseling program that makes a difference in our students' lives.

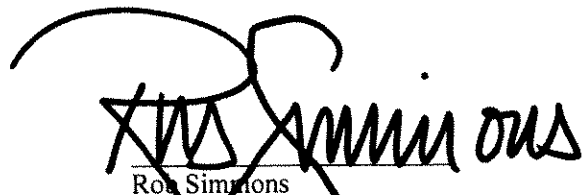
The need for counseling services at both the elementary and secondary school levels is clear. Counselors are at the forefront of our efforts to help students cope with school violence, natural disasters, heightened threats of terrorism, as well as the ongoing mental health effects that such events may have on students. Additionally, school counselors guide their students in academic, social and career development so they can achieve success and prepare for fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. Students' academic achievement is the cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program is an important component in our efforts to improve students' achievement.

During these challenging times, however, school counselors' ability to assist students is hindered by extraordinarily high student-to-counselor ratios. Currently, the average student-to-counselor ratio in America's public schools is 488 to 1. The American Counseling Association, American School Counselor Association, and American School Health Association recommend a maximum ratio of 250 to 1 to adequately meet students' needs.

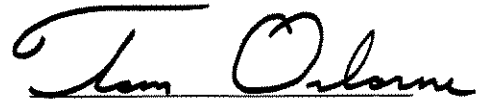
Congress must fulfill its commitment to our students' success and well-being by sufficiently funding the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program. We look forward to working with you on this important initiative and appreciate your consideration of this request.

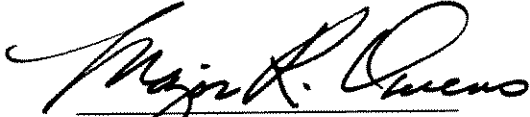
Sincerely,

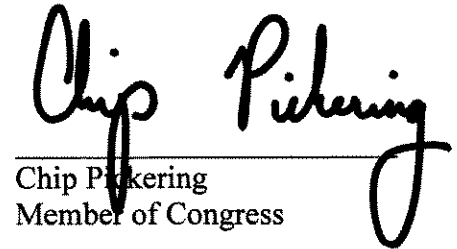
  
James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress


  
Ron Simmons  
Member of Congress


  
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress


  
Tom Osborne  
Member of Congress


  
Major Owens  
Member of Congress

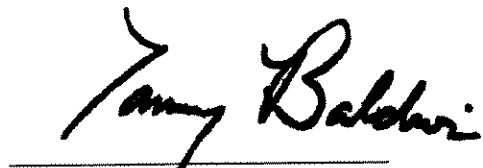
  
Chip Pickering  
Member of Congress


  
Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

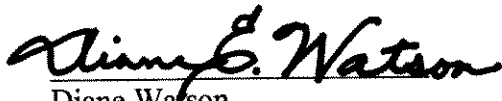
  
Ron Paul  
Member of Congress

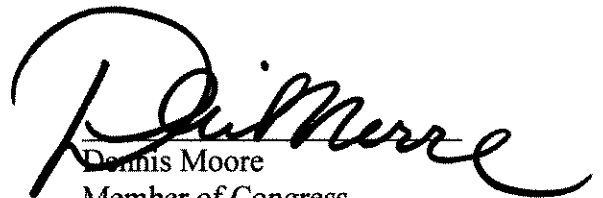
  
Donald Payne  
Member of Congress

  
Nancy Johnson  
Member of Congress

  
Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress

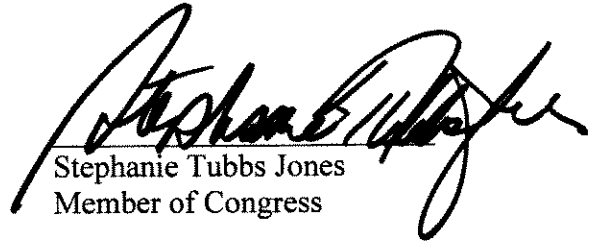
  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

  
Diane Watson  
Member of Congress

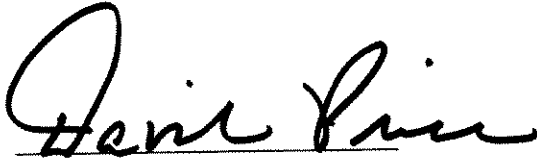
  
Dennis Moore  
Member of Congress



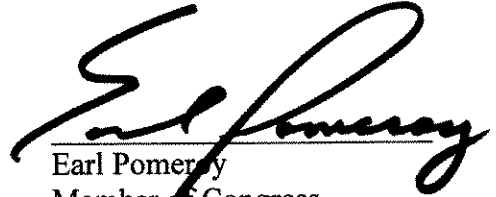
Ted Strickland  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Tubbs Jones  
Member of Congress



David Price  
Member of Congress



Earl Pomeroy  
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern  
Member of Congress



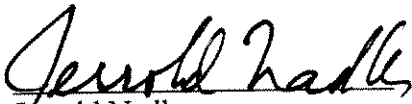
Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



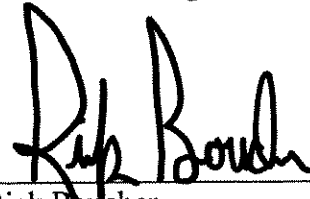
William Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress



Neil Abercrombie  
Member of Congress



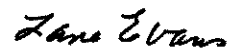
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Rick Boucher  
Member of Congress

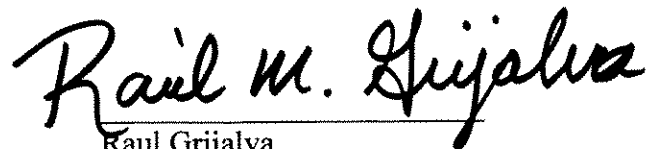


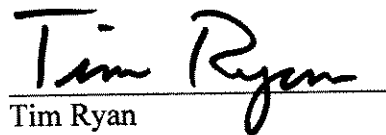
Mike McNulty  
Member of Congress

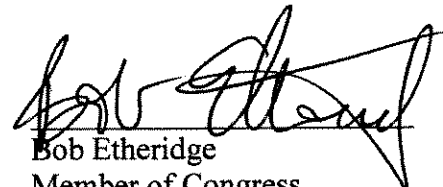


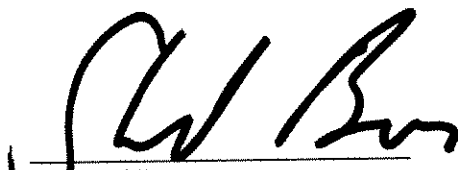
Lane Evans  
Member of Congress

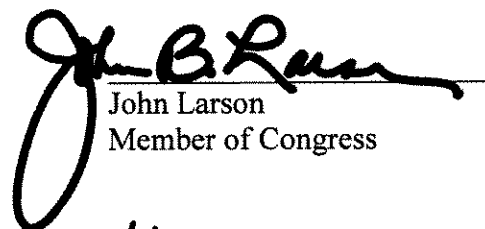
  
Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

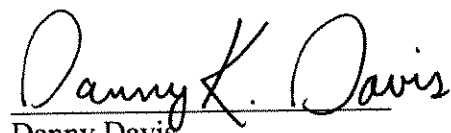
  
Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress

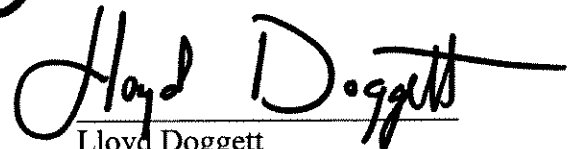
  
Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

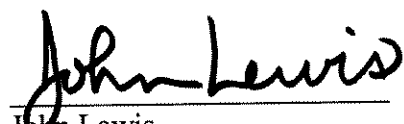
  
Bob Etheridge  
Member of Congress

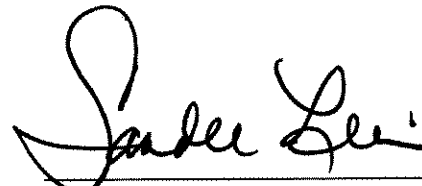
  
Sherrod Brown  
Member of Congress

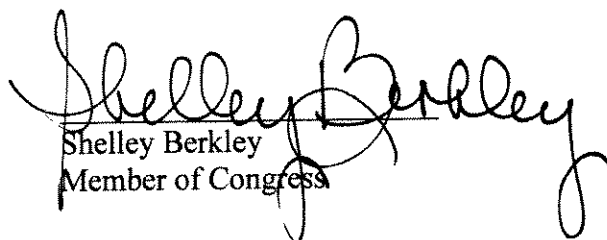
  
John Larson  
Member of Congress

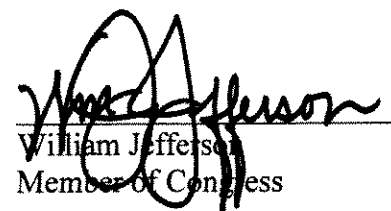
  
Danny Davis  
Member of Congress

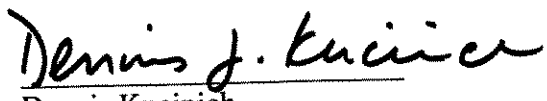
  
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

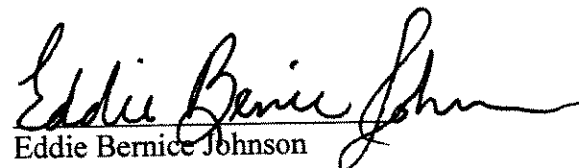
  
John Lewis  
Member of Congress


  
Sander Levin  
Member of Congress


  
Shelley Berkley  
Member of Congress

  
William Jefferson  
Member of Congress

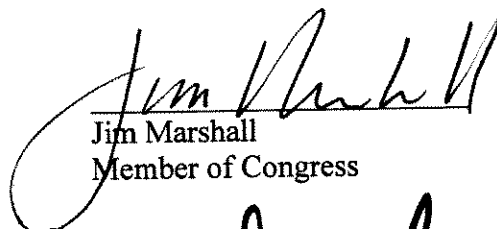
  
Dennis Kucinich  
Member of Congress


  
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

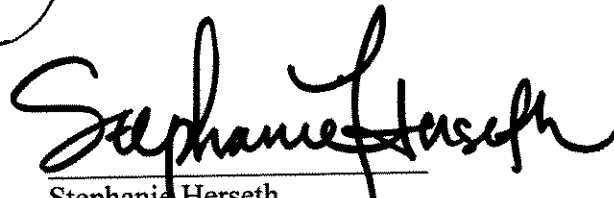
  
Silvestre Reyes  
Member of Congress

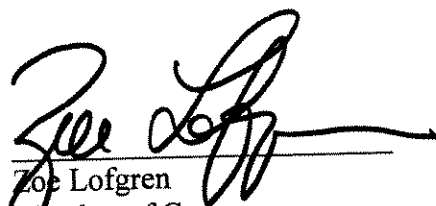
  
Robert Wexler  
Member of Congress


  
Madeleine Bordallo  
Member of Congress


  
Jim Marshall  
Member of Congress

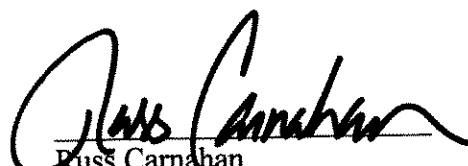
  
Charles Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

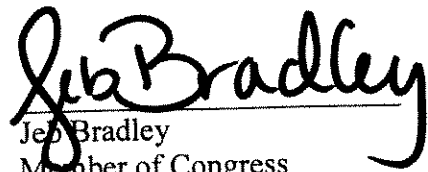
  
Stephanie Herseth  
Member of Congress

  
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

  
Elijah Cummings  
Member of Congress

  
Nick Rahall  
Member of Congress

  
Russ Carnahan  
Member of Congress

  
Jeb Bradley  
Member of Congress